

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 2225

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, XF
SUBJ: WEST BANK REACTION TO PROPOSED CAMP DAVID SUMMIT

SUMMARY: WHILE INTEREST IN THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT IS GENERAL ON THE WEST BANK, ONLY A FEW ENTERTAIN HOPES OF PROGRESS. THAT RARE OPTIMISM DERIVES FROM A PERCEPTION THAT THE USG, PARTICULARLY PRESIDENT CARTER, IS SEIZED WITH THE MID-EAST DILEMMA AND DESPERATELY WANTS SADAT TO SUCCEED. EXPECTATIONS ARE, HOWEVER, VAGUE. MANY PESSIMISTIC MODERATES CREDIT SADAT WITH TRYING HIS BEST AND EXPOSING ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE, BUT THINK HE SHOULD GO NO FURTHER. SADAT'S CRITICS THINK HE IS WASTING TIME AT BEST OR ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE DUPED BY THE US AT WORST. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH EXTENSIVE MEDIA PLAY, FEW PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IGNORE THE UPCOMING TRIPARTITE SUMMIT AT CAMP DAVID. THE INTEREST, HOWEVER, HAS NOT BEEN ACCOMPANIED INITIALLY BY ANY GREAT EXPECTATIONS. AS ONE
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PALESTINIAN EDUCATOR SAID: "RADIO ISRAEL KEEPS INFORMING US HOW STUBBORN THEY'RE GOING TO BE."

2. THE RELATIVE OPTIMISM THAT DOES EXIST, AS EVIDENCED BY "AL QUDS" EDITORIAL AUG 9 AND 10, DERIVES FROM A BELIEF THAT THE USG SO FEARS AN END TO THE SADAT INITIATIVE THAT IT WILL FINALLY PRESSURE ISRAEL TO MEET SADAT'S MINIMAL

DEMANDS. MODERATES, LIKE YUSIF RIDA (UNRWA DIRECTOR NABLUS), BELIEVE PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL ATTENTION INDICATES THAT AMERICA IS PROFOUNDLY SERIOUS. CARTER WOULD NOT INVEST HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE IF THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS WERE UNCERTAIN OR NEGATIVE, REASONED RAMALLAH ACTIVIST RAYMONDA TAWIL.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE MODERATES WHO STICK WITH SADAT ARE SIMPLISTIC OR VAGUE. THEY ARE UNABLE TO DEFINE PROGRESS AS ANYTHING SHORT OF REALIZATION OF SADAT'S WELL-KNOWN PUBLIC DEMANDS. THE MILGOV, WE ARE TOLD, HAS CONTINUED TO SEE VARIATED REACTIONS TO BEGIN'S AUTONOMY PLAN, BUT HAS RECEIVED, BY ALL INDICATIONS, CATEGORIC REJECTIONS.

4. OTHER MODERATES, E.G. THE AL MASRI'S OF NABLUS, CREDIT SADAT WITH GOOD INTENTIONS AND WITH HAVING EXPOSED ISRAEL AS THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE, BUT SEE NO REASON TO CONTINUE. "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH," WASFI AL MASRI TOLD POLOFF LAST WEEK, "HE (SADAT) SHOULD GO NO FURTHER." ACCORDING TO RIDA, HIKMAT AL MASRI SHARES THAT VIEW DESPITE PROSPECT AT CAMP DAVID.

5. SADAT'S CRITICS ARE MANY. ACCORDING TO REUTERS, RAMALLAH MAYOR KARIM KHALAF HAS STATED THAT CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS WERE BEING "EXPLOITED BY ZIONISM TO GAIN TIME AND CONSECRATE OCCUPATION OF ARAB TERRITORIES." WEST BANK COMMUNISTS, SUCH AS "AT TALIAH" EDITOR BASHIR BARGHUTI, AND THE PRO-PLO EDITORS CONFIDENTIAL

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OF "AL FAJR" DISMISS SADAT AS AN AMERICAN DUPE AND THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT AS MERELY AN ELEMENT IN THE AMERICAN CONSPIRACY.

6. COMMENT: THOUGH PALESTINIANS HERE SEE NO GAINS AS YET FROM THE SADAT INITIATIVE, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER STILL CREDIT EGYPT'S PRESIDENT WITH PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND SINCERITY IF NOT GOOD JUDGMENT. LIKEWISE, PRESIDENT CARTER SEEMS TO FARE BETTER THAN DOES US MIDDLE EAST POLICY IN THEIR EVALUATIONS. THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE CARTER AND SADAT ACHIEVE PROGRESS, BUT PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THEY HAVE NO CLEAR DEFINITION OF WHAT PROGRESS WOULD BE SHORT OF ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE TO SADAT'S SWEEPING DEMANDS FOR COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION.
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